FOUNDATION FOR
BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Contact: Eva Maciejewski
emaciejewski@fbresearch.org
(202) 618-7089

FBR Supports Smart Use of Animal Testing

Washington, DC – Foundation for Biomedical Research President Matthew R. Bailey issued the following statement regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s announcement and memorandum about phasing out animal testing at the EPA:

"The Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) supports both science and efforts to reduce animal testing wherever feasible, insofar as New Approach Methods (NAMs) produce equal or better scientific results. We applaud the EPA for its renewed effort to reduce animal testing and for its grant to five research universities to explore NAMS. We do, however, want to emphasize that NAMS are frequently used as adjuncts to, and not replacements for, animal testing and research. With this in mind, we urge extreme caution when considering testing any new substances first in humans – including airborne, water, and ground contaminants – before testing them with animal models. History is replete with examples of first-in-human testing with disastrous results, and we recognize the general social agreement that such practices are unethical. I think everybody would like to ensure those mistakes are not repeated just to follow a categorical imperative to eliminate all animal testing and research in toxicity studies by 2035.

"Further, it should be noted that the animal testing referred to in the EPA announcement is but one aspect of animal research. While so-called alternative methods have reduced animal use specifically in the area of toxicity testing, animals continue to play a central and irreplaceable role in basic biomedical research, which seeks to understand the incredibly complex mechanisms of all living systems. All researchers already embrace the concept of the 3Rs: reducing the number of animals used where possible, refining procedures to use fewer animals, and replacing animals when feasible. Currently, alternative methods are valid for some research projects, but

not others. Organs-on-a-chip and cells-on-a-chip are outstanding achievements, but they aren't without limitations. These promising technologies tend to provide a one-dimensional view of what happens in an entire body, and as such, are often used as an early screening of new chemicals or compounds before advancing to animal tests. Computer simulations also have a place in research. But supercomputers can't predict the weather with 100% accuracy, much less predict everything that will happen once a new chemical or compound enters a body. Are these risks the public is willing to take, and are policy decisions like these truly being driven by science?"

###

About FBR:
The Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) is America's most experienced, trusted and effective non-profit dedicated to improving human and animal health by promoting public understanding and support for biomedical research. FBR illuminates the essential role animal testing and research plays in changing health outcomes and defeating illnesses affecting both people and animals. FBR promotes understanding and support for biomedical research. FBR was established in 1981 and is headquartered in Washington, DC.